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N.Y. firm utilizes Information Directorate test facility

by Francis L. Crumb, Information Directorate

ROME, N.Y. — A unique testing facility operated by the Air Force Research Laboratory's Information Directorate recently completed a successful one-year Commercial Test Agreement (CTA) with Harris RF Communications, one of five operating divisions of Harris Corp.

"Harris required a test facility in Central New York to assist them in evaluating advanced voice and data technologies over High Frequency radio links," said Vincent S. Janik, program manager with the directorate's Information Systems Division. "Since there were no suitable commercial test facilities located in Central New York, Harris approached Information Directorate for use of its Stockbridge Research Facility and associated test support."

The Stockbridge Research Facility, one of two sites for the directorate's "Upside-Down Air Force," is located atop a 2,300-foot hill 23 miles southwest of Rome. At the "Upside Down Air Force" sites, aircraft which are no longer flight-ready are mounted atop pedestals to evaluate the effects of airframe fuselage and external equipment on antenna patterns. Ten minutes of testing in this manner is equivalent to 10 hours of actual flight testing, saving countless man-hours and millions of dollars each year. Larger, strategic-type aircraft such as KC-135s, C-130s, B-52s and sections of a B-1B have been tested at the Stockbridge site.

"Under the CTA, we provided Harris engineers with space and some technical support," said Mr. Janik. "The company benefited by gaining access to test facilities and testing support that are not available in the commercial sector and this will result in superior products that they can market to both the military services and to the commercial markets."

The CTA was recently amended to extend the company's access to the test facility through March 2005. Harris RF Communications Division is a leading supplier of secure voice and data communications products, systems and networks to military, government, and commercial organizations worldwide. @